

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for the preparation of expandable vinylaromatic polymers ~~which comprises~~ comprising:

- a) forming an expandable bead by polymerizing in aqueous suspension at ~~last~~ least one vinylaromatic monomer in the presence of a suspending agent selected from inorganic salts of phosphoric acid;
- b) recovering the expandable ~~beads~~ bead from the reaction container;
- c) washing the ~~beads~~ expandable bead thus obtained with an aqueous solution containing 0.005-2% by weight of a non-ionic surface-active agent;
- d) recovering the washed ~~beads~~ expandable bead substantially without any inorganic salt of phosphoric acid, on the surface, and drying them in a stream of air.

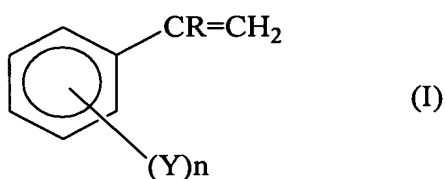
Claim 2 (Original): The process according to claim 1, wherein the polymerization in aqueous suspension of the vinylaromatic monomer is carried out in the presence of an initiator system and an expanding agent.

Claim 3 (Original): The process according to claim 2, wherein the initiator system comprises two peroxides, one with a half time of an hour at 85-95°C and the other with a half time of an hour at 110-120°C.

Claim 4 (Original): The process according to claim 2, wherein the expanding agent capable of being englobed in the polymeric matrix consists of liquid substances with a boiling point ranging from 10 to 100°C.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of the previous claims~~ claim 2, wherein the expanding ~~system~~ agent is added in ~~such~~ quantities as to give a polymer in the form of beads which can be trans-formed to produce expanded articles having a density ranging from 5 to 50 g/l.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of the previous claims~~ claim 1, wherein the vinylaromatic monomer is selected from those having the general formula:



wherein n is zero or an integer ranging from 1 to 5, R is a hydrogen atom or a methyl and Y is a halogen, such as chlorine or bromine, or an alkyl or alkoxy radical having from 1 to 4 carbon atoms.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of the previous claims~~ claim 1, wherein the non-ionic surface-active agent is selected from ~~alcohols/ the group~~ consisting of an alcohol, a C₈-C₁₈ ethoxylated and/or propoxylated fatty acids acid, an ethoxylated and/or propoxylated glycerin ethers ether with an average molecular weight Mw ranging from 3500 to 5000, ~~glycols~~ a glycol condensed with ethylene oxide and/or propylene oxide, an ethoxylated and/or propoxylated nonyl ~~phenols~~ phenol with 0-5 units of ethylene oxide and/or propylene oxide, an ethoxylated and/or propoxylated sorbitol with 5-20 units of ethylene oxide and/or propylene oxide, a fatty ~~acids~~ acid of coconut salified with K, MEA and mixtures thereof.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of the previous claims~~ claim 1, wherein the washing takes place at a temperature ranging from 20 to 50°C, in a stirred ~~containers~~ container containing the surface-active agent in a concentration ranging from 0.005 to 2 % by weight, ~~preferably from 0.02 to 1%.~~

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): Expandable beads of vinylaromatic polymers ~~obtainable according to~~ obtained by the process of ~~any of the previous claims~~ claim 1 comprising 0.05-25% b.w. of athermaneous or refracting materials.

Claim 10 (New): The process according to claim 8, wherein the stirred container containing the surface-active agent is in a concentration ranging from 0.02 to 1% by weight.